42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

843 Nevertheless such extreme cases are the exception, as may be readily understood. Under normal conditions an Isneg mother is delivered at home surrounded by persons who are in a position to assist her and to look out for whatever is necessary or suitable on this important occasion.

843 824 If a future mother is able to secure some *tazańlaká* or *ańlaká*, this is fortunate indeed: in the eyes of the Isneg, this herb exerts a magical influence on the birth of a child, and the mother who carries the *tazańlaká* (in Iloko *laká* means "easiness") on her body will be delivered without the least difficulty. The *măyanáw* vine also is supposed to have the same power. Should she happen, however, to meet *ańlóńag* (a small herb), the Isneg are firmly convinced that a single look at these nefarious plants will cause her to experience much difficulty in giving birth to her child.

1. Normal Cases

844 I shall first examine the usual case of a single living child that is born to a couple of happy parents; later on a few abnormalities will be considered.

Here, even from the beginning, I am confronted with contradictory statements, namely with reference to the place of the house where the mother gives birth (*maxan-aná-*, from *an-aná-*, "child") to her child. Some say that the mother is delivered near the place of the hearth; others assert that any part of the house will do. From Bayag comes a corroboration of the first statement: at that place the kitchen is usually separated from the house proper, and it was told me that in case a woman was in labor the hearth would be taken out of the kitchen and brought to the house, after which the child would be born near this transferred hearth.

Everything considered I do not think it very difficult to explain the contradiction involved in the above statements and to arrive at the exact truth about the matter. All my informants agreed that the place of a woman after her delivery was near the hearth (*dapúg*) of the house. Now, whereas all these informants were men, and men have no business to be present at the exact moment of child-birth, the real place may very easily have escaped the notice of some of them in every instance, and the subsequent position of the mother may have led them to believe that the actual place was the original one. Besides, it is obvious that, whenever possible, the mother will go near the hearth from the beginning in order to avoid the trouble of being

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

transferred afterwards, so that the surmises of our men would seem really to be founded on fact in most instances. The question, however, is to know if this has to be so or if it can be otherwise. 844

Now, it has been proved already to everybody's satisfaction that a woman may give birth to her child anywhere, even in the field; and so I believe that I am justiled in stating that an Isneg woman is usually delivered somewhere in the house, that the exact place is of no importance, and that in case she was not lying near the hearth during the event, she has to be brought there immediately afterwards, or, as in the Bayag case, the hearth has to be brought to her.

The latter case may even help to prove the exactness of my statement. It may happen of course that the hearth is brought into the house before the birth of the child; but that this must be done necessarily is very doubtful. Indeed that bulky piece of furniture has forcibly to be handled by several men, and one wonders how the men would always and in every case be able to proceed to this burdensome operation before all approach to the future mother is barred to them, especially when one considers on the one hand how little the Isneg care for the future, for what is not actually at hand, and on the other hand, how suddenly the occurrence under consideration may startle the whole household.

Consequently it is more than probable that the location of the mother at the time of delivery is unimportant, while her subsequent position near the hearth of the house is required as an absolute necessity.

From now on the mother has to sleep at the same place every night, although she may have been moving around the house or even outside during the daytime. This lasts as long as she is considered too weak to comply with all her ordinary duties. 846

If she should dare leave the house at night, for instance to satisfy the wants of nature, she is liable to meet a certain spirit who is in the habit of coming down from his home in the sky whenever a child has been born. Meeting that *anito* means nothing else to the mother but becoming affected at once with a violent diarrhea. A woman who has been struck with that disease through the action of the spirit just mentioned is said to be *maanikān*. For the rest the Isneg do not know the name of this imp; he is known only by the bad effects that result from a woman in confinement meeting him at night outside her house. Unlike *Talomásim*, who will be mentioned presently, he exerts his influence only at night, and besides, although the Isneg 846 776

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (fill date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

846 776 know how to keep *Talomásim* at a distance, in the case of this nameless spirit they are absolutely powerless: the only way for a young Isneg mother to avoid him is to stay in the house at night.

846 372 Fire (*apúy*) plays a very important role whenever a new Isneg citizen has been born on our planet. Leaving aside the question of the place of the mother near the hearth of the house which has just been mentioned, I should like to draw attention to the following:

1. Although, even under ordinary circumstances, the fire of the hearth is rarely extinguished completely, it is of paramount importance that it should not be let go out for a single moment during the whole period that immediately follows the birth of a child, which period lasts until the mother has recovered sufficient strength to move around freely, in fact, I believe, as long as the mother has to sleep near the hearth at night.

2. At least on the first day, that is before the child is one day old, it is absolutely forbidden for anybody to take fire or firebrands (*alitán*) from the hearth: this is strictly taboo (*kannáw*).

3. No alien fire may be brought inside the house on that day.

4. Three other taboos have also probably to do with the respect shown to fire on such an occasion: again at least during the first day, it is strictly forbidden to use green bamboos (*namáta ńa bólo*) to feed the fire. The same prohibition is extended to the passing of green leaves over the fire in order to soften them: this is very often done with young banana leaves, young palm leaves, etc. that will be used for packing and other purposes; the fire renders them very supple and easily pliable, in such a way preventing them from splitting at every turn. A third taboo concerns anything green (*namáta*), not dry: nothing of the kind is allowed to be brought into [753 856] the house. Should any of these three taboos be infringed, the Isneg firmly believe that the babe will become thin and emaciated, it will be *malandtān*.

844 A woman in childbed, wherever she be situated inside the house, is assisted by all women who belong to the same household, and even little girls are allowed to witness the birth of a child. Experienced old women of the neighborhood are called in to take the lion's share in bringing the event to a happy issue, in some places always, in others whenever the inmates of the house prove incapable of the task or when the mother has much difficulty in bringing forth her baby. Midwives are called *mańa-lón* in Isneg.

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

844 ●

All men who do not belong to the family are forbidden to enter the house, and even those who live there, whether small boys or adults, have to keep away from the mother,—a prohibition which is easily complied with, as Isneg houses are very roomy. The husband alone forms an exception to this rule in a few places, Bayag for instance, where he is allowed to assist the women; but in most other localities, he himself, although permitted to stay in the house, has to turn the other way and is forbidden to witness the birth of his offspring. Nobody, however, is allowed to remain at the door (*zagiyáńán*): this is strictly taboo; all persons have either to enter the house, provided of course they belong to that set of people who are not forbidden to be present on such an occasion, or to stay outside below the ladder.

844
824

The Isneg mother brings forth her child kneeling down on the floor of her house. In order to facilitate the birth of the child, the Isneg sometimes place one or more *pulpultóg* (a fungus in the shape of a small round white ball, growing on wet soil) on the body of the future mother. If she experiences unusual difficulty, the *bańsdl* (a thorny woody vine) is used for the same purpose. Occasionally some *kalobbazá* (small herbs) are placed over the place of her lungs, lest the latter move. Lung is called *bazá* in Isneg.

846
778

A small section of light bamboo (Schizostachyum mucronatum), on which a razorlike edge has been cut by means of a headax, is a very appropriate instrument for the severance of the umbilical cord (*púsag*). The afterbirth, to which has been tied some kind of herb (*kaddát*) known to the shaman as an amulet (*tánib*), is placed either on a *duyát* (wooden plate), or in a *bali-lukú* (spathe of the betel nut) or a *tázo-* (coconut shell), and then buried either far away from the house (at Bolo, etc.), or under the house, immediately below the hearth (at Musimut, Bayag, etc.).

845
778
789

A Bayag man told me that, in case the child was born still enveloped in a membrane, which he said was a very rare occurrence, his people rolled the latter up in a piece of cloth and stowed it away somewhere in one of their trunks; they considered it as a very powerful amulet in business: it would enable the owners to buy many things. He also stated that the newborn babe was bathed immediately in ordinary cold water; in other places, however, and this I consider to be much more general, the child gets its first bath only when it is able to turn itself upon its mat without assistance, or to creep over the floor on hands and knees (*maxaddń*).

42: Vanoverbergh E-5 (no date) 1936-1938 OA1 Philippines
Apayao OA5
Isneg

764 292 When the first outburst of lamentations, in the case of our dead Isneg, has come to an end, the bystanders at once proceed to the preparation of the *innát* or corpse. The latter is first stripped of its old clothes, and carefully washed and cleaned; after that it is wiped dry and finally dressed up in the best clothes available. Some natives do not even shrink from clothing the corpse in silk, if their means allow such luxury; at any rate, it would be utterly shameful to the Isneg not to dress a dead body decently. This latter performance is called *magpaar-armát* (transitive: *paarmattán*; from the stem *armát*, "garments"). As has been stated before, each garment is partially torn (*maxăyxăy*) at one side.

342 844 354

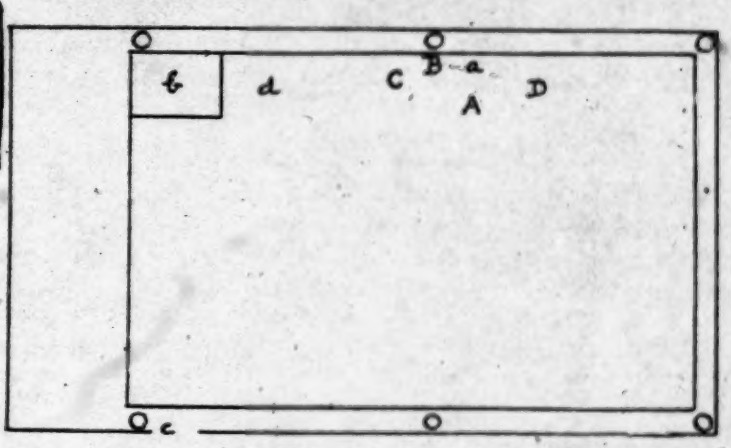

FIG. 3. FLOOR OF AN ISNEG HOUSE

A, Place of bier; a, place of the head of the *innát*; B, place of the *innát* in sitting posture; C, place of the *aróbon*; D, place of mourning relatives; b, hearth; c, door; d, place of woman in childbed.

764 775 772 In some places they insert a few *líbnó* herbs in the clothes of the *innát* for the following reason: on its way to the realm of the dead, the *kaduduwá* is supposed to pass through a camote or sweet-potato field, in which there is a hut inhabited by an old woman, who is intent on taking away from all passers-by their provisions and all their belongings; but if the latter have *líbnó*-herbs about their person, the old woman is powerless and they pass along unscathed.

764 In the meanwhile some others have been preparing the *tádag* or bier. The *tádag* consists of a certain number of entire bamboos, tied

They have a feast: rice
basi, and the greater part of a pig or dog are served. 584
Then business begins. The parents and relatives of 583
the youth, arrange the amount of the dowry, *todog*. [574
If it is of less value, the youth must stay in the house 242]
of the girl. When the contract is agreed upon, it is strictly adhered to; and the youth and girl are said to be married.

The real ceremony, *aqueb*, then follows. The pa- 585
rents of the girl bring pigs and baskets of rice-cakes to the house of the youth. The girl comes in company with several old women. They all stop about one hundred yards from the house of the youth. There they are met by the parents or mother of the youth, bearing valuable gifts for the parents of the girl. The youth's mother then requests the girl from her parents. Upon approval, the whole company moves to the house, where the mother presents her gifts to the parents of the girl. The rice cakes are sold to the re- [735]
latives of the youth, the nominal price being P1.00 per basket. Then the merry-making starts and con- [784]
tinues through the night. The youth and girl must not eat the sweets, as one of them would die. In the morning final payments of the dowry are made and distributed. Then the young couple are considered to be properly married, but still controlled by their parents.

When the young woman feels that she is about to 844
give birth, either the husband or the mother-in-law will twist a piece of cloth, light one end, and place it, [42]
the *pungan*, at the door. With it is the coconut shred-
der, *igad*. These guard the woman while delivering so that no *anito* can come into the house to annoy the

844 woman, making her delivery so hard that she will die. They are kept there until the woman is strong enough to go outdoors again.

846 As soon as she is able, the woman goes to the river to wash, accompanied by a male relative holding an *aliwa* on which is ginger. On the way he must always be in the rear, as the *aliwa* and ginger are guarding the woman from some *anito* which desires to cut off her head and cause her death. If the *anito* succeeds, she will die suddenly upon reaching home.

When they arrive home, the man places the ginger with the *pungan* and *igad* at the door. These are kept there until the woman is strong enough to go to work. During that time it is strictly prohibited that anyone outside of the family shall enter the house. It means death to do so. This strong taboo is observed until the woman says that she is ready to receive a visitor. The wife seldom leaves her home and work.

586 The marriage bond is permanent; but it may be
[461 broken by the man if he finds that his wife performs
684] very little farm labor. Even though they have children, he is entitled to divorce her upon giving her a
[587] small portion of the conjugal property. Both are
[581 then free to marry again. The woman must impli-
583] citly obey her husband and be absolutely true to him:
684 no little flirting with other men. If she is found guilty of any offence, her fine is heavy. If she commits adultery with another man, both should be killed: the man by the relatives of the wife, and the wife by the relatives of the husband. However, if there are extenuating circumstances and the death sentence is not imposed, both guilty parties are sentenced